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Letter dated 26 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should be grateful if you would circulate as a document of the Security Council the attached document, a summary of key themes of the Security Council's workshop on the Mano River Union on 18 July 2002, prepared by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Presidency of the Council.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**

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Annex to the letter dated 26 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

SECURITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP ON THE MANO RIVER UNION 18 JULY 2002

Summary of Key Themes Prepared by the Presidency

Lessons Learned in Sierra Leone

The workshop discussed the lessons learned from UNAMSIL's deployment in Sierra Leone and the significant improvements made since the crisis of May 2000. It was agreed that, while every conflict situation was different, some factors were common to all:

Peacekeeping operations

- There is a need for early international attention and prompt action, including by the Security Council.

- There should be rapid agreement to an appropriate, clearly defined and robust mandate for any UN peacekeeping force, backed up by adequate resources.

- The key players must share a common purpose and the determination to drive it forward. This includes both Security Council members, neighbouring countries, the UN Secretariat and troop contributors.

- All key players, both in New York and in the field, must share a common understanding of peacekeeping mandates and the rules of engagement of peacekeeping operations (PKOs). This is essential to allow clarity of purpose and objective about a PKO's political aims and its operational activity.

- UN PKOs should be prepared for the worst case scenario. The capacity and determination of rebel forces should not be underestimated. PKO resources should not be measured simply by the number of troops. The quality of their equipment and training, and the political commitment behind them, are crucial in ensuring that a PKO can implement its mandate. Member states' tenacity and determination to stay the course are vital.

- A strong PKO deployment is an effective deterrent to parties who might otherwise return to fighting. A robust military posture should be complemented by political engagement so there is a clear, preferable alternative to the military option.

- It can be valuable to have a lead nation to drive forward the international effort.

- A regional strategy is needed from the start. This is particularly true in Sierra Leone as the situation in all three Mano River Union countries is so inter-connected.

- Interventions must be properly co-ordinated, both within the UN family and between the UN and regional players like ECOWAS. Any transition from a regional intervention to a UN PKO needs to be especially carefully managed so that command and control of troops is clear.

- All UN efforts must be integrated within the peacekeeping mission. Peacekeepers are more successful when they work alongside human rights specialists, development experts and the humanitarian community. The DSRSG for Governance and Stabilisation in Sierra Leone, also the Resident Co-ordinator, is a good example of the necessary operational integration.

- Flexibility is needed to respond to changing circumstances, so that the Security Council does not get locked into strategies which clearly aren't working. This may need to include the provision of additional resources, or strengthening of peacekeeping mandates, as happened with UNAMSIL after May 2000.

- PKOs should not withdraw too quickly. The benchmarks for drawdown need to be carefully thought through and factored into planning early on, including in the development strategy of the country concerned.

Peacebuilding

The transition from peacekeeping to peace-building is crucial and needs to be built into planning at an early stage. They are part of the same continuum and should overlap.

- Security sector reform is a critical element of post-conflict support. This needs to get underway early, while the protective umbrella of a UN PKO remains. Reforms must be sustainable. Strengthening the capacity of the police is one of the next key challenges for Sierra Leone.

- Reform of the judicial and penal systems, and building respect for human rights, are equally important. The issue of impunity must be addressed (as in Sierra Leone through the special hybrid process of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) to facilitate reconciliation and the return of refugees. In the longer term, this also helps attract investment.

- The economic, as well as political, causes of conflict must be addressed. If unemployed young people – not all ex-combatants – have no economic opportunities, this can threaten stability.

- Adequate funding must be allocated to post-conflict peace building initiatives. These are a type of conflict prevention themselves and are much cheaper than peacekeeping. UNAMSIL costs $700million a year, yet it is difficult to find even $13 million for reintegration. Bilateral and other donors have to get involved and complement the UN's efforts, as part of a co-ordinated strategy (such as the UN

strategy to support national recovery and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone). A phased approach from peacekeeping (funded from assessed contributions) to peacebuilding (voluntary contributions) is needed.

- The World Bank can help governments in post-conflict transitions by providing budget and technical support, complementing key partners' efforts.

Humanitarian action

In discussion of the humanitarian aspects of Sierra Leone, the key points made were:

- Civilians were the direct object of attack in Sierra Leone; they were not just incidental victims of the conflict. There was massive population displacement.

- The appointment of the combined DSRSG/Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Sierra Leone allowed humanitarian issues to be centralised within the political and military decision-making of UNAMSIL. Concerns that this would jeopardise the independence of the humanitarian actors and subordinate them to a political agenda were not realised.

- The aide-memoire on protection of civilians in conflict must be used when the Council draws up peacekeeping mandates:
  - All the relevant objectives of the 13 themes in the aide-memoire were included in UNSCR 1270 (UNAMSIL's mandate). SCR 1270 specifically authorised UNAMSIL to protect civilians under imminent threat of violence. This was an important step towards greater cohesion and integration in peacekeeping operations.
  - The humanitarian information centre in UNAMSIL helped provide accurate security and military information, crucial for the protection of humanitarian personnel and civilians.
  - DDR should be built into peace agreements and the special needs of children recognised.
  - Women and girls suffered disproportionately in the Sierra Leone conflict. They were the victims of terrible sexual violence. PKO mandates should include the special protection and assistance needs of women and girls – not just gender mainstreaming but responses to endemic gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.
  - Peacekeepers should be trained in humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Human rights and civil affairs offices should be included in all PKOs.

- It was welcome that UNAMSIL peacekeepers were able to improve humanitarian access and help UNHCR return refugees and IDPs to their homes.

- Special attention should be paid to gender issues in justice and reconciliation. Rape was used as a war crime in Sierra Leone. Adequate funding must be provided for the mechanisms of justice.

- The continued, and recently increasing, refugee flows in the region are a security problem as well as a humanitarian one. Addressing this is part of building regional security. Refugee flows can be an indicator of trouble or conflict to come.

- More funding is needed to address the humanitarian problems of the region.

The Mano River Union: A Co-Ordinated Plan For The Way Ahead

During discussion about the future of the Mano River region, the following themes and ideas for the way ahead emerged.

Peace-building in Liberia

- Peace in Liberia is a prerequisite for stability in the sub-region. It is essential to protect the investment the international community has made in Sierra Leone.

- All efforts at reconciliation within Liberia and between Liberia and its neighbours must be encouraged and co-ordinated. These include the Rabat Process (including a second summit), the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, and ECOWAS. All parties must participate; talks in which the government or the LURD do not take part will not produce results. The participation or observation of the UN, as well as regional organisations like ECOWAS and the African Union, could lend credibility to such talks and strengthen support for the implementation of any agreement which emerges.

- Such talks should aim, first, at a ceasefire; and then at a wider programme of reconciliation including DDR, free, fair and inclusive elections, improved governance and respect for human rights.

- The new UN West Africa office in Dakar could play an important role in these efforts. It can act as a focal point for the UN's support for peace building and a concrete demonstration of the UN's interest in peace building in the region.

- The efforts of civil society, such as the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network, should be recognised and supported.

- Liberia's relations with its neighbours are an essential factor in improving security. Liberia's neighbours must prevent attacks being launched from their territories into Liberia, as UNSCR 1343 demands.

- Alongside the current policy of containment, the possibilities for constructive engagement with Liberia should be considered in order to increase the incentive for President Taylor to promote internal dialogue and reconciliation, a DDR programme for armed factions, security sector reform, improved governance and democratic institutions and respect for human rights. A comprehensive conflict resolution strategy is needed for Liberia, as for Sierra Leone.

- The UN should consider assistance to the elections in Liberia in 2003. Meanwhile democratic elements in Liberia, including civil society and the church, should be encouraged and supported. It is essential not just to replace one poor government with another. Freedom of expression for the press, political parties, NGOs and the Liberian people must be guaranteed. The UN should strengthen its efforts by appointing a new head of the UN Office in Liberia and extending its mandate to include promoting national reconciliation, improving public information and increasing the focus on human rights.

- The humanitarian situation in Liberia must be addressed. Humanitarian assistance should not be conditioned by political strategies or imposition of sanctions.

Sanctions

- The sanctions on Liberia have helped to cut President Taylor's links to the RUF and restore peace to Sierra Leone. The Security Council should make this clear to other key players, such as ECOWAS, in order to reconcile possible differences that could open up between the Security Council and others, and thus build and maintain a consensus on the future of sanctions.

- It must be made clear that sanctions are mechanisms for contributing to peace and security, not instruments of reprisal.

- The continuing flow of small arms into West Africa threatens to destabilise the region. Efforts to stop this must be reinforced and the source of arms supplies identified. The ECOWAS moratorium on small arms should be reinforced.

- Illegal exploitation of economic resources like diamonds must also be stopped, backed up by global efforts such as the Kimberly Process. Governments in the region must adopt policies to manage and regulate the use of natural resources for the benefit of the whole population.

Regional and sub-regional organisations

- The UN should involve ECOWAS fully in a co-ordinated approach to the sub-region, particularly through the new UN Office for West Africa. Other regional organisations, such as the African Union's new Peace and Security Council, should be involved where appropriate.

- ECOWAS capacity in mediation and conflict prevention needs strengthening, including support for their four early warning regional centres.

- The Mano River Union should play a more active role in building and maintaining peace and security in the sub-region. To do so it needs additional support, to revive its institutions and to implement its existing protocols, especially on security and defence, and the confidence-building measures recently agreed (eg joint border security patrols).

- The Mano River Union is an important forum for building personal relationships among heads of state. The Security Council might invite the three foreign ministers to a meeting in the margins of the General Assembly to review progress of the Rabat Process.

UN action

- The UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, has strategic initiatives in place to support reconstruction and recovery in the region. But these suffer from a lack of funding and the absence of a co-ordinating policy mechanism at regional level. The following are therefore needed:

    - Additional financial resources at the national level to implement quick impact projects to help consolidate peace (eg through the Sierra Leone recovery and peacebuilding strategy).
    - The UN Office for West Africa should prepare, with UN country teams, the MRU and ECOWAS, a co-ordinated and integrated UN strategic framework document to back up the Rabat Process and build confidence among the parties, including on cross-border issues like HIV/AIDS and trade. This would provide a political framework for the economic and development efforts underway by UNDP and others.

- A further Security Council mission to the region could, amongst other aims, help shape the regional strategy to be developed by the UN Office for West Africa.

- The UN Office for West Africa should do an audit of armed groups in the region as a first step towards a wider DDR programme.

- A contact group on the MRU, with limited membership, could be useful in forging a coherent agenda in support of the Rabat Process and sub-regional peace efforts.

- The new ECOSOC ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict offers an opportunity to work with the Security Council's new ad hoc group on Africa. The Security Council group should increase dialogue and co-ordination with regional players.